

VZCZCXRO1519  
PP RUEHTRO  
DE RUEHTU #0043 0141526  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 141526Z JAN 08  
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS  
TO RUEPGCA/USEUCOM AIDES VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY  
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4294  
INFO RUCNMGH/MAGHREB COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

UNCLAS TUNIS 000043

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/MAG (HARRIS AND HOPKINS)  
EUCOM FOR ECJ4-HA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SOCI](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [TS](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR HIGHLIGHTS USG SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC  
PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS ON SOCIAL ISSUES

¶1. (SBU) Summary. During his January 7 visit to the Governorate of Nabeul, the Ambassador highlighted USG financial and public support for Tunisian government and civil society efforts to promote the integration of handicapped youth through local educational initiatives. The Ambassador visited two vocational training centers for handicapped youth that were constructed with funding from the US Department of Defense Humanitarian Assistance (HA) Program. The Ambassador also met with the Governor of Nabeul to express USG appreciation for his support for the HA program and discuss regional priorities, including development of the agricultural and tourism sectors and attracting US investment. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) On January 7, the Ambassador visited the Governorate of Nabeul and met with Governor Mohamed Lamine El Abed. The Governor noted that Nabeul, Tunisia's third largest governorate, has strong agriculture, handicrafts, industrial and tourism sectors. El Abed told the Ambassador that he hopes to attract more US investment, particularly in Nabeul's burgeoning ecotourism industry. The Ambassador said he is working to increase US business interest in Tunisia, which has made impressive economic and social progress. He also expressed USG thanks for the Governor's support for the two HA-funded projects in Nabeul, which the Governor characterized as examples of civil society development. El Abed added that he fondly remembered the days of Peace Corps in Tunisia and said that English education is a strategic choice.

¶3. (U) The Ambassador also visited the two vocational training centers in Nabeul and Menzil Temime that were constructed with funding from the DOD Humanitarian Assistance Program. The Embassy provided \$550,000 to the Association for the Parents and Friends of the Handicapped (APAHT) to construct the two educational and training facilities that promote a better quality of life for youth with special needs and their families. The Ambassador had the opportunity to speak with tens of students at the centers, as well as learn more about the programs from APAHT volunteers and professional educators. He recognized the centers as symbols of education and opportunity -- common values shared by Tunisia and the United States. The Ambassador also expressed his support for the two projects and highlighted the efforts put forth by the Tunisian authorities, community participants and APAHT members for their support for and coordination of the projects. (Note: Since 1999, the HA Program has provided almost \$5 million in funding for eight projects in Tunisia. End Note.)

Please visit Embassy Tunis' Classified Website at:  
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/tunis/index.cfm>  
GODEC